

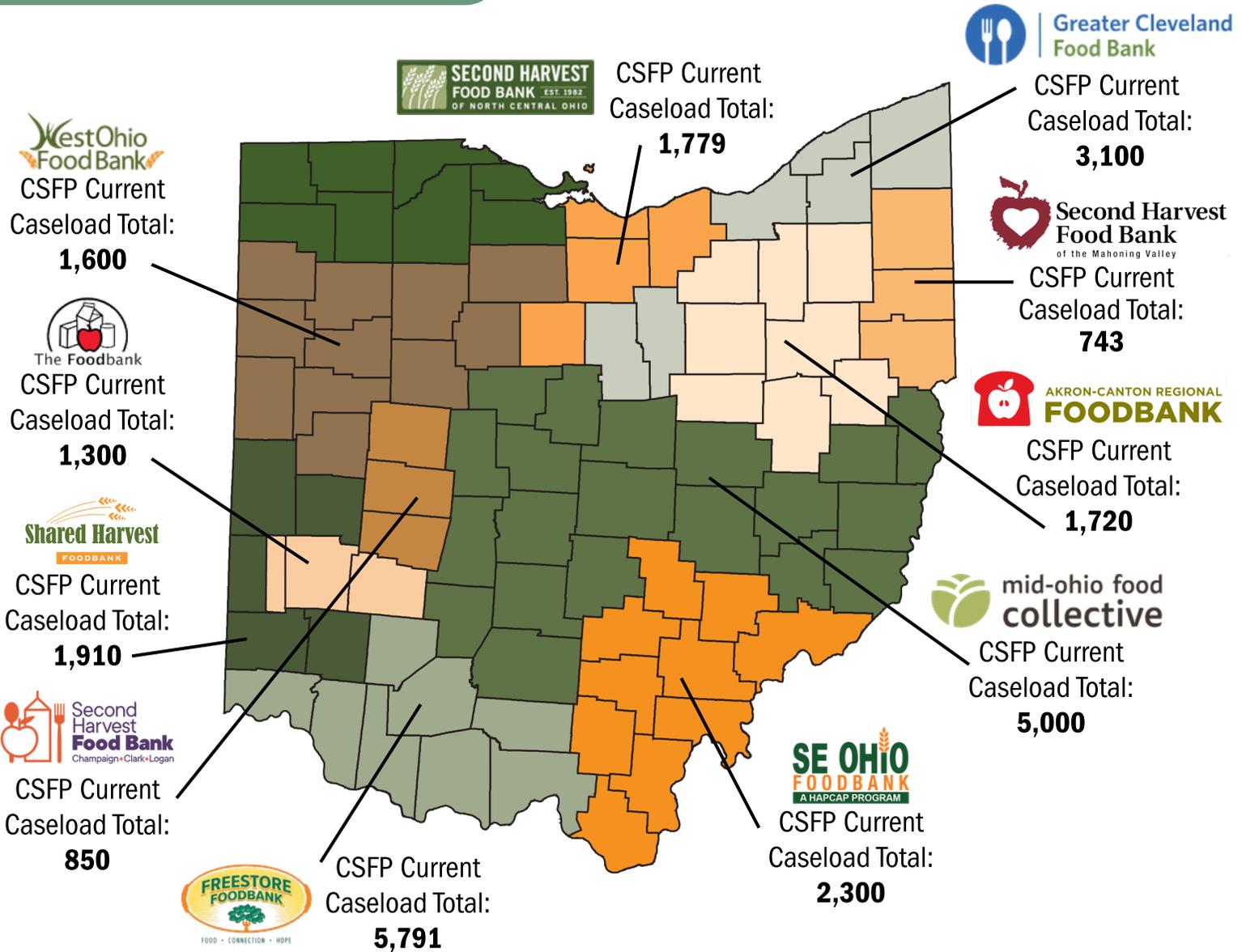
CSFP in Action: Program Models Across Ohio's Foodbank Network



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CSFP by the numbers



60

The age seniors become eligible for CSFP

150%

The percentage of the federal poverty level that make seniors eligible for CSFP

40lbs

The approximate weight of the CSFP box

11

Ohio Association of Foodbanks members that distribute and deliver CSFP

30,000

Ohio's approximate total caseload

249,579

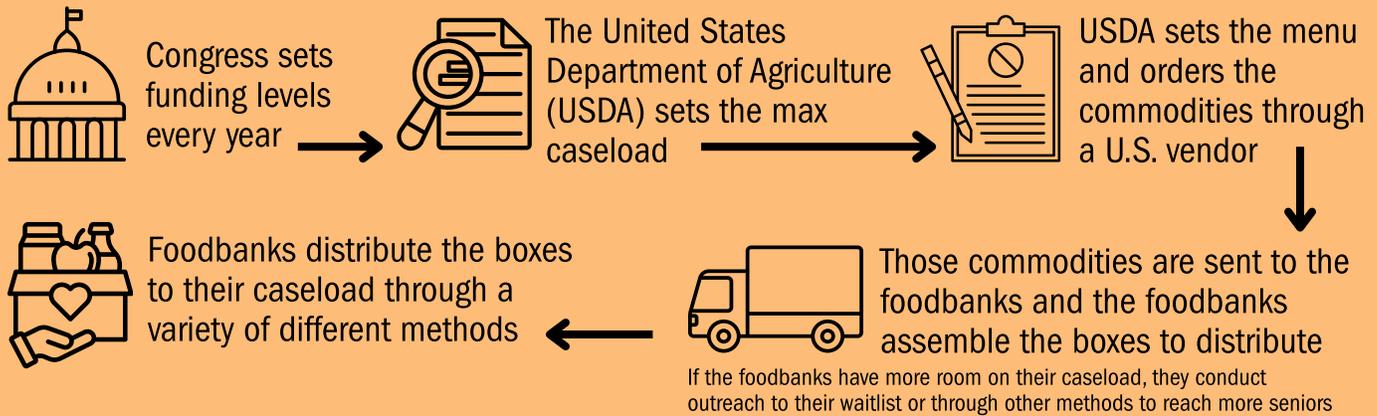
Food insecure older adults living in Ohio

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to CSFP

Foodbanks who operate CSFP across the country run the program a little differently. Foodbanks might also approach the program differently in their own service territory (e.g., using different approaches for their city centers vs. more rural areas). Many factors influence how a foodbank will operate CSFP, including their geography, staffing, partnerships, participant needs, number of volunteers available and more.

Where the foodbank is in their service territory and how rural or urban their service territory is are critical factors that foodbanks must work through. Foodbanks in rural areas might struggle to effectively distribute the senior boxes, with seniors having to travel long distances to pick up their boxes at a major distribution, even if the foodbank makes an effort to set up a mass distribution in that county or has an agency partner distribute the CSFP boxes. Transportation barriers, especially in rural areas, make it difficult for seniors to get the nutritious food they need. Foodbanks, usually in one of the larger population centers in their service territory, might struggle to do outreach for their more rural counties, with many folks not understanding that the foodbank represents them and their community or that they are actually eligible for the program.

Foodbanks heavily rely on volunteers to pack boxes and help them distribute. Smaller, more rural foodbanks also struggle to recruit volunteers for many of the same reasons they struggle to reach CSFP recipients. The lack of large corporate volunteer groups make it much harder to get the boxes packed quickly. When foodbanks do not have volunteer groups lined up to pack boxes, they are forced to have their staff step in, pausing work that is not mission-critical to get the boxes out the door.



Foodbanks are sophisticated logistical experts, and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) is a strong example of that complexity in action. Foodbanks operating CSFP must receive individual USDA commodities and determine how to assemble them into monthly food boxes. This requires careful coordination - scheduling volunteer shifts in advance, ensuring enough volunteers or staff are available, and preparing for the full caseload ahead of distribution. Many foodbanks rely on staff and volunteer groups to pack food items into each box prior to distribution. Boxes must be assembled thoughtfully to ensure items fit properly and weight is evenly distributed. Once packing is complete, foodbanks must coordinate distribution - planning pickup locations or delivery routes and ensuring participants know when and where to receive their food.

CSFP Delivery Overview

All 11 Feeding America foodbanks in Ohio that operate the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) provide some form of home delivery for seniors enrolled in CSFP. This commitment reflects a clear reality that for many older Ohioans, transportation barriers, mobility limitations, and geographic isolation make in-person pickup difficult or impossible.

However, while every foodbank offers delivery in some capacity, no foodbank currently has the resources to provide universal home delivery across its entire service territory. Each foodbank must tailor its approach based on geography, staffing levels, infrastructure, and available funding. In many cases, particularly in rural communities, limited transportation networks, workforce shortages, and rising operational costs restrict the ability to scale delivery services to meet growing need. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, foodbanks use a combination of strategies to reach seniors where they are. This report highlights three primary models currently in use across Ohio.



Home Delivery Through a Foodbank-Operated Volunteer Program

Foodbanks recruit and coordinate volunteers to complete home deliveries, assigning each volunteer a designated “route” to deliver CSFP boxes to multiple recipients at once. When capacity and funding allow, foodbanks may offer incentives to support volunteer recruitment. This model not only increases delivery efficiency, but also creates opportunities for meaningful connection between volunteers and seniors—enhancing the overall impact of the program beyond food assistance alone.



Collaborating with Partners to Support Targeted Delivery

Foodbanks may partner with third-party vendors or delivery providers, such as DoorDash or Amazon Flex, to facilitate targeted home delivery. This approach is most effective for recipients living in population centers or within 10–15 miles of a foodbank warehouse. While availability depends on the presence of delivery drivers in the area, this model can help address staffing limitations and capacity constraints on the foodbank side, ensuring timely and reliable service to eligible participants.



Leveraging Existing Capacity in Rural Areas

In rural communities, foodbanks may leverage existing partnerships or coordinate with agency partners to support home delivery. For example, foodbanks might collaborate with local Councils on Aging, senior centers, or other community-based organizations to facilitate distribution. If a CSFP participant is also enrolled in Meals on Wheels, deliveries may be coordinated to provide both services at the same time.

CSFP Delivery by the Numbers

Ohio's foodbanks are committed to delivering CSFP to seniors who cannot travel to distribution sites. The following data reflects both the breadth of delivery efforts statewide and the resource constraints that prevent expansion.



"This food helps me feed my grandkids." - CSFP Recipient from Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio

"As I have gotten older, I couldn't work as many hours. And so much of my money is going to medications, bills and other things. I eventually had to start choosing between food or rent or medicine. I have been thankful to be a part of the CSFP Program that has helped alleviate some of the financial stress I experience while allowing me to still have a nutritional diet." - CSFP Recipient from Shared Harvest Foodbank

"Through the CSFP Program and DoorDash, I have been able to have more nutritious food delivered to my door. It is hard to travel with my medical conditions, and I am so thankful and blessed." - CSFP Recipient from Shared Harvest Foodbank

"A senior on the CSFP has expressed she is very grateful. She receives \$30 in SNAP each month and her 3 grandkids live with her. She has shared she is very grateful for the foodbank and the assistance provided and says the food in the CSFP box is a blessing." - West Ohio Food Bank

Home Delivery through a Foodbank Operated Volunteer Program

Some foodbanks rely on volunteers to both pack and deliver CSFP boxes. Volunteers are often assigned a delivery “route,” allowing them to serve several seniors in a single trip. However, most foodbanks do not have the funding capacity to provide incentives, such as gas cards, to offset volunteer expenses.

Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio offers a strong example of how this model can succeed when supported with modest but meaningful resources. In Lorain, the foodbank provides volunteers with a \$15 gas card each time they complete a delivery route. They emphasize that this incentive is critical to volunteer recruitment and reducing financial barriers to participation. Second Harvest, which operates a robust volunteer delivery program supported in part by community grants, shared what sustained delivery funding would mean for their work:

“It would mean massive delivery growth in all counties. We have the manuals created; we are just waiting to roll out delivery ecosystems with our partners. The incentives for delivery we find are essential to sourcing volunteers, at least in the beginning. We also use DoorDash for missed deliveries or special circumstances.”

This model demonstrates that flexibility and variety in delivery methods, including volunteer drivers and contracted services, are essential to ensuring seniors consistently receive food. With sustained delivery funding, foodbanks could scale proven models that are already built and ready to expand.



Volunteer engagement is also central to packing and preparing CSFP boxes. Second Harvest Food Bank of Champaign, Clark, and Logan Counties utilizes volunteers each week to pack CSFP boxes for distribution. They have partnered closely with a local school, where students write encouraging notes and holiday cards that are placed inside the boxes. Students then come to the foodbank to help pack the boxes themselves, knowing their handwritten messages will reach a local senior in need.

This partnership does more than prepare food for delivery - it builds connection across generations. Students gain awareness of food insecurity in their own community, while seniors receive not only nutritious food but also messages of encouragement and care.



For many volunteers involved in home delivery, participation becomes more than a logistical task and evolves into a relationship. When the same volunteer regularly delivers to the same senior, meaningful connections often form. As Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio shared:

“Volunteers check on seniors and offer socialization. We leave the level of interaction up to the comfort of the volunteer. They often share baked goods, and some delivery teams buy each senior a small box of chocolates for Christmas, Easter, Valentine’s Day, etc. Some volunteers even purchase extra groceries or items for their seniors on their route. We make sure volunteers know nothing is required of them—but the seniors become attached to the volunteers and vice versa. If we change routes, we certainly hear about it.”

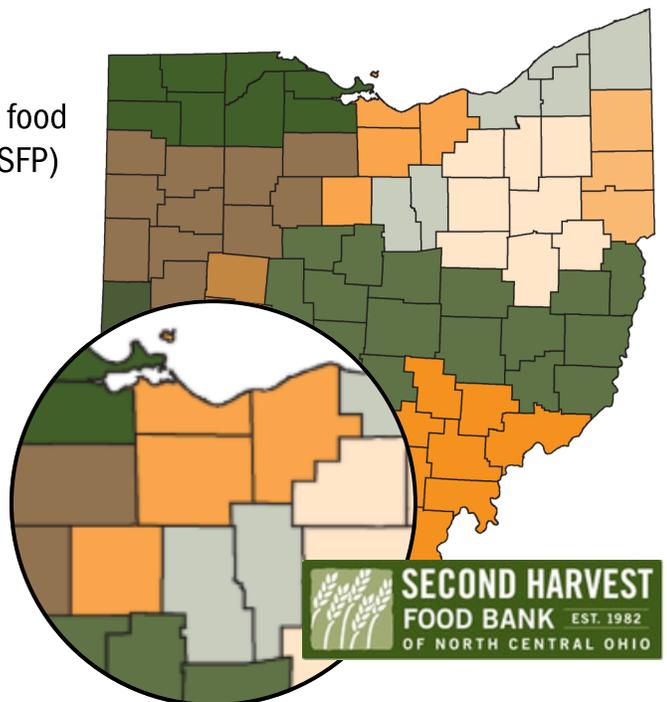
For older adults, particularly those who are homebound or have limited mobility, consistent social interaction is closely linked to improved mental and physical health outcomes. These volunteer-driven models expand the impact of CSFP beyond nutrition support alone. When supported with adequate delivery and administrative funding, they strengthen community bonds, promote aging in place, and improve senior well-being across Ohio.



Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio helps ensure older adults have consistent access to nutritious food through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) across Crawford, Erie, Huron, and Lorain counties. They currently support their CSFP delivery model through volunteers and valued third-party partners.

They currently support a total CSFP caseload of 1,779 households which includes 894 in Lorain, 370 in Erie, 265 in Huron, and 250 in Crawford counties.

They currently maintain a waitlist of approximately 200 eligible seniors looking for food assistance in their area.



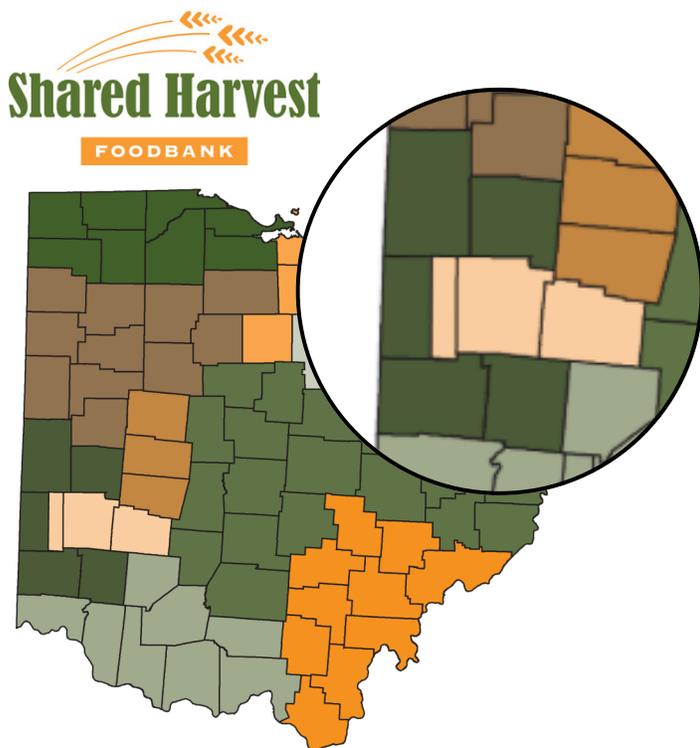
Collaborating with Partners to Support Targeted Delivery

To reach seniors who are homebound or face transportation barriers, some Ohio foodbanks partner with third-party delivery providers such as DoorDash and Amazon Flex. These partnerships allow foodbanks to supplement existing delivery models and expand access in areas where drivers and infrastructure are available. This approach is generally more feasible in larger population centers, where delivery networks are established and distribution sites are centrally located. Most third-party deliveries occur within a 10–15 mile radius of a warehouse or partner agency, making rural and geographically dispersed areas more difficult and expensive to serve adequately.

Importantly, foodbanks do not rely exclusively on third-party providers. Instead, they integrate these services into a broader delivery strategy that may also include staff drivers, volunteers, and partner agencies. This diversified approach allows foodbanks to respond flexibly to volunteer shortages, staffing constraints, or special delivery circumstances. While third-party providers work to keep their programs competitive and cost-effective, funding remains the primary barrier to expansion. Without sustained delivery funding, foodbanks must limit routes, cap participation, or prioritize certain areas over others.

Shared Harvest Foodbank and Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank are leaders in implementing this model.

Shared Harvest Foodbank shared that with sustained delivery funding, they could serve homebound seniors across their entire service territory, dramatically expanding access for older adults who currently struggle to participate due to transportation limitations.



Shared Harvest Foodbank serves Butler, Darke, Miami, Preble, and Warren counties, with its main warehouse located in Fairfield, Ohio. From this hub, they deliver within a 10-mile radius in Butler County and work alongside dedicated community partners and volunteers to reach neighbors in Darke, Miami, and Warren counties.

Currently serving their total CSFP caseload of 1,910 and operating at capacity, Shared Harvest continues to meet growing need in their region. They utilize DoorDash to help ensure efficient, reliable deliveries to the communities they serve.



Targeted Delivery, continued

Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank emphasized the long-term program stability that delivery funding would create:

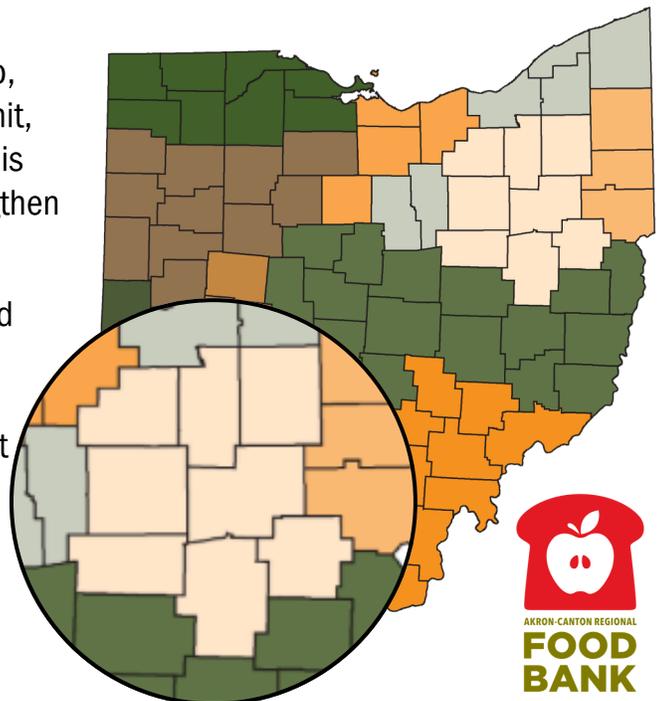
“Having sustained funding for CSFP deliveries would allow us to reach more seniors and overcome the ubiquitous barrier of having older adults come out to pick up a heavy food box every month, particularly when many of them don't drive or have the support and resources to get a ride. Our agencies that already provide home delivery have a much easier time consistently distributing their full caseload and have less participant turnover than sites where participants must pick up the box in person. Receiving home delivery makes the program more appealing to applicants as well because access is such a widespread barrier.”

Home delivery does more than increase convenience. It improves program retention, reduces participant turnover, and ensures seniors consistently receive the nutritious food they rely on each month. For many older adults, delivery is the difference between participating in CSFP and going without. With sustained, flexible delivery funding, Ohio foodbanks could scale targeted delivery partnerships, stabilize participation, and ensure that geography and mobility are not barriers to food security.

Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank serves Northeast Ohio, including Carroll, Holmes, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, Tuscarawas, and Wayne counties. Their main warehouse is located in Akron, with a satellite site in Canton to strengthen their regional reach.

Foodbank-led CSFP home deliveries are currently offered in Summit and Stark counties. In other areas, including Medina and Tuscarawas counties, partner agencies help deliver boxes using dedicated local volunteers. While not all CSFP sites offer home delivery at this time, the network continues working to expand access where possible. To support efficient and flexible deliveries, Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank utilizes both Amazon Flex and DoorDash.

They currently support a total CSFP caseload of 1,720 households across the region, including 631 in Summit, 472 in Stark, 185 in Medina, 160 in Tuscarawas, 142 in Portage, 75 in Wayne, 35 in Carroll, and 20 in Holmes counties.



“When I speak every month with the people on our CSFP delivery list, so many of them thank us profusely for the food box and mention what a big help receiving it as a home delivery is.” - CSFP Coordinator at Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank

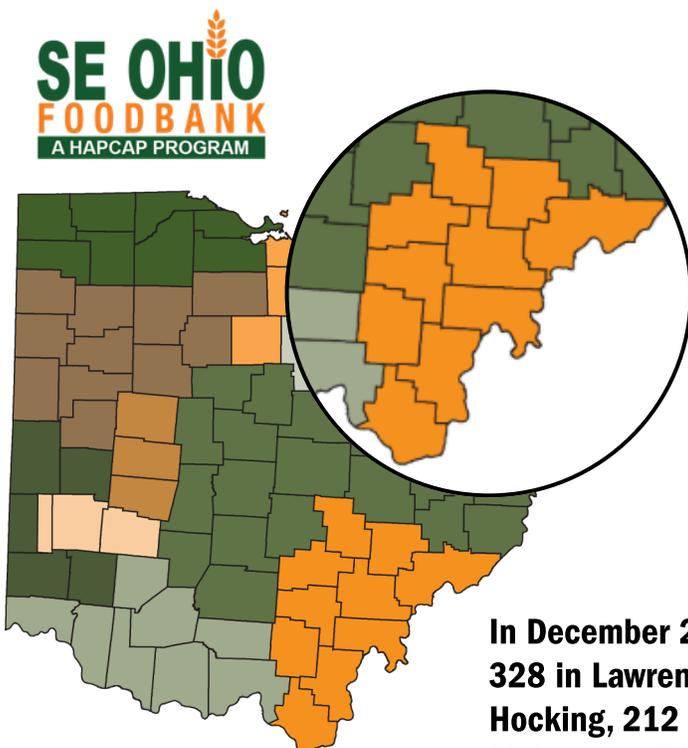
Leveraging Existing Capacity - Especially in Rural Areas

Several foodbanks are leveraging existing infrastructure and partnerships to expand CSFP access, particularly in rural communities where transportation barriers are significant. Strategies include supporting agency partners with home delivery and coordinating with senior-focused programs like Meals on Wheels.

Southeast Ohio Foodbank + Kitchen exemplifies this approach. As the Meals on Wheels provider in its service territory, they can deliver CSFP boxes to seniors enrolled in both programs, maximizing efficiency and reducing duplication. They also work with agency partners to support deliveries and operate distribution sites across their region to improve accessibility.

When operating distributions directly, the foodbank often supplements CSFP boxes with fresh produce, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) commodities, and other items to enhance nutritional value. While delivery reach is limited, they are able to support some home deliveries with minimal additional overhead by leveraging existing routes, staff, and partnerships. SE Ohio Foodbank + Kitchen emphasizes how transformative sustained delivery funding would be in their rural, high-poverty service area:

“Sustained funding for delivery would be transformational. It would allow us to consistently reach seniors who face significant transportation and physical barriers and are currently unable to access CSFP through traditional pick-up models. With reliable funding in place, delivery could be planned, staffed, and scaled intentionally rather than offered on a limited or case-by-case basis. Ultimately, this would increase access, improve equity, and ensure that some of our most vulnerable seniors are not excluded due to mobility, health, or geographic challenges.”



SE Ohio Foodbank + Kitchen, a program of HAPCAP, works to reduce food insecurity in their ten county service area of Athens, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Morgan, Perry, Vinton, and Washington County. Their total CSFP caseload is 2,300 households across the region, and they are actively working to reduce a recently increased waitlist to expand access for eligible seniors.

Some partner pantries coordinate CSFP home deliveries directly, and the foodbank is also able to provide delivery for seniors enrolled in their Meals on Wheels program. Outside of these partnerships, delivery is currently limited.

In December 2025, 329 seniors were served in Athens County, 328 in Lawrence, 309 in Perry, 284 in Washington, 215 in Hocking, 212 in Jackson, 172 in Gallia, 137 in Morgan, 117 in Meigs, and 71 in Vinton.

Challenges and Themes

While exploring the various delivery models that Ohio foodbanks operate for their service territory, a few themes and challenges rose to the surface. Most foodbanks do not receive outside grant funding to make CSFP deliveries and absorb the costs of operating the program in their operating budgets. As rising costs are sustained, funding will continue to be a barrier for foodbanks operating these programs for their seniors, even though they understand how critical this service is.

Operational barriers also limit expansion. These include staffing constraints, the need for additional vehicles, and, when utilizing third-party providers such as DoorDash or Amazon Flex, a shortage of available drivers in rural communities. Each of these challenges ultimately points back to the need for sustained, reliable funding to support and scale delivery efforts.

Seniors themselves face significant barriers to accessing CSFP through traditional distribution models. Limited transportation, mobility challenges, and chronic health conditions make it difficult for many older adults to travel to distribution sites and transport the heavy CSFP box home. Hospitalizations or unexpected health events can also result in missed distributions. When these absences go unreported, participants risk removal from the program due to consecutive missed pickups, making it difficult to re-enroll in a program that often has waiting lists.

The Foodbank, Inc. highlights the importance of delivery in maintaining both health and program stability:

“If we could expand our delivery, we would likely have less clients falling off the program due to unscheduled misses. Some unscheduled misses that are not communicated to our staff are later disclosed as clients being in the hospital or unable to get out, or their proxy is ill. Two consecutive unscheduled losses requires removal from the program. It would be helpful to also use funds to support senior food delivery while seniors wait to be added to the program.”



Opportunities and Solutions

CSFP is a popular and vital program for enrolled seniors. While it serves as a lifeline, many participants share that the monthly food box is difficult to lift and that transportation remains a significant barrier to accessing distributions.

Foodbank leaders consistently express a desire to expand home delivery options but cite limited funding and operational capacity as major constraints. Without dedicated resources, scaling delivery programs is difficult, particularly in rural communities where need is high and transportation challenges are more acute.

The *Delivering for Rural Seniors Act* offers a solution. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would establish a three-year pilot program to provide grants supporting CSFP home delivery. Grant funds could be used to cover transportation costs, staffing needed to operate delivery programs, and outreach efforts to enroll current or eligible participants in home delivery options. The bill prioritizes rural-serving entities, directing support to areas where delivery expansion is most critical. Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, Joree Novotny shared:

“The Ohio Association of Foodbanks and our members are grateful to Senator Husted for his co-sponsorship of the Delivering for Rural Seniors Act. Ohio’s foodbanks, in partnership with USDA and the State of Ohio, proudly operate CSFP to connect about 30,000 seniors with nourishing staple foods every month. This legislation would help us make sure that seniors in need, especially those in rural Ohio, where service delivery is often more challenging, can have healthy food, and hope, delivered to their doorstep. We look forward to partnering with Senator Husted on this impactful bill.”



Conclusion

Foodbanks operate CSFP differently based on geography, participant needs, volunteer capacity, and available grants and partnerships. As needs evolve, so must the approach. Home delivery significantly reduces the barriers many seniors, particularly those in rural communities, face in accessing this critical nutrition program.

While there is broad recognition that home delivery is a necessary next step, sustainable funding and operational capacity remain major barriers to expanding this model statewide. The Delivering for Rural Seniors Act would help alleviate these challenges by providing dedicated support for delivery while preserving the flexibility foodbanks need to design programs that best serve their local communities.

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks urges Congress to pass the Delivering for Rural Seniors Act so that Ohio seniors can meet their nutritional needs, regardless of where they live.



If you are looking for CSFP resources in your county or want to apply, you can find your local foodbank here.



If you are eligible for CSFP, you may also qualify for other programs. Learn more about applying for SNAP here.



You can find additional supporting resources on our website ohiofoodbanks.org.



For more information about how CSFP operates in Ohio or questions about this report, please contact Sarah Kuhns at skuhns@ohiofoodbanks.org.

Thank you to the Ohio foodbanks participating in CSFP who generously shared their time, data, and insight to inform this report, including:





The Ohio Association of Foodbanks proudly represents Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,600 member charities, including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and supplemental feeding programs. To learn more about our programs and partners please visit

ohiofoodbanks.org